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# EDA *America*

*Quarterly Insights and Best Practices in Economic Development*

**Fall 2009 Issue**

## **Excellence in University-Led Strategies**

*Center for Integrated Manufacturing Studies at Rochester Institute of Technology, Rochester, New York*

The role of a university in regional economic development has long been debated. The battle between research theory and applied research, as well as the push and pull between academia and industry, has often led to uncoordinated economic development efforts.

However, the Rochester Institute of Technology's (RIT) Center for Integrated Manufacturing Studies (CIMS) leads economic development initiatives in its region through marrying applied research and product development with industry-driven solutions.

Beginning in 1992, CIMS set out to increase the competitiveness of manufacturers throughout New York State through applied research, technology transfer and workforce training. CIMS provides research, technology development expertise and laboratories to help a company expand its market, enhance productivity, train personnel and speed innovation and product development.

As part of this mission and vision, CIMS also set out to develop a two-way culture – emphasizing the need for industry and academia to work together to meet the workforce, technology and intellectual property challenges facing the manufacturing industry. CIMS leaders recognized that the inherent incompatibility between business



The solid oxide fuel cell laboratory is one of the many state-of-the-art facilities in the CIMS building at RIT.

and academia combined with the decline of America's manufacturing industry would prove to be a great challenge.

"What we did was structure our program, open our doors and speak their (business) language to better understand what the specific challenges were," said Dr. Nabil Nasr, Director of CIMS. "We've built a strong bridge between us (research) and the industry...and we build programs and initiatives that focus on what they need. It's a two-way street – and we work together collectively."

The CIMS partnership is built through dedicated research faculty and significant infrastructure that businesses can tap into to address a range of industry challenges. "The conflict between academics versus applications is simply not there," said Dr.

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## **A Message from the Assistant Secretary**



Each year, the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) recognizes superlative examples of economic development ideas and best practices from across

the nation through our Excellence in Economic Development Award program. This year's award winners have implemented strategies that help support innovation and entrepreneurship and promote sustained job growth.

As someone whose roots are squarely planted in local economic development—both as a mayor of Bloomington, Ind., and most recently as a private developer—I know that tough economic times mean that economic development practitioners must dig deeper to find

EDA America is a quarterly publication brought to you as a benefit of a partnership among the Economic Development Administration (EDA), DTI Associates, Inc. and Anthology Communications. The partnership is designed to provide information about economic development practices and programs to economic development practitioners who serve distressed communities throughout the United States. It also provides telecasts and a monthly e-newsletter, EDA Update. For more information, visit the EDA Web site at [www.eda.gov](http://www.eda.gov).

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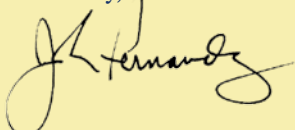
innovative ways to attract and grow businesses and get people back to work. That's why I am proud to highlight the success stories of this year's EDA Excellence Award winners.

President Barack Obama's goal of spurring economic activity and creating jobs while laying a foundation for sustained economic growth is mirrored in these stories. The award recipients highlighted have created thousands of job opportunities for displaced Americans, provided entrepreneurs with invaluable assistance, taken pride in preserving our nation's history and turned a time of economic crisis into a fiscal opportunity.

With nearly 100 nominations, competition for these awards was more intense than ever.

I would like to congratulate the 2009 award winners and hope that the strategies in this issue inspire more economic development success stories around the nation. Thank you for your dedication and commitment to regional economic prosperity.

Sincerely,



**John Fernandez**  
U.S. Assistant Secretary of Commerce  
for Economic Development

## Excellence in Rural Economic Development

*Louisiana Business and Technology Center, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, Louisiana*

You've probably heard the old saying: "If Mohammed can't come to the mountain, bring the mountain to Mohammed." Leaders at Louisiana State University's (LSU) Louisiana Business and Technology Center (LBTC) have taken that adage to heart with their mobile classroom, also known as the "Incubator on Wheels."

An extension of LBTC's regular business incubation programs, the Incubator on Wheels is a 30-seat mobile classroom, driven by a tractor trailer. It was developed to provide LBTC with a highly visible means to reach out to Louisiana's rural communities. These communities are home to many aspiring entrepreneurs and existing business owners, but in most cases these communities are too small to need a full-fledged local business incubator facility.

The Incubator on Wheels program started when LBTC Director Charles D'Agostino and his team were visiting a NASA sponsored exhibit that used a mobile classroom and museum. The impressive NASA mobile exhibits were built by Healthtronics, a firm headed by an LSU alumnus, which agreed to donate a similar mobile vehicle to LBTC.

The mobile unit was ready in October 2005, roughly one month after Hurricane Katrina. Because of the huge scope of that disaster, the Incubator on Wheels was

deployed to hard hit areas. In many communities, the mobile unit was the only source of electricity or computer access for affected businesses.

While the unit focused on disaster recovery for some time, it was redeployed for its original mission – serving rural communities and entrepreneurs – in 2006. The mobile unit promotes what D'Agostino calls "value-added development." As he notes, "we want to help local firms move from commodity production to more valued-added activities where they can earn more money and provide better jobs."



LBTC's Incubator on Wheels visits rural communities throughout Louisiana.

The services are delivered onsite in cooperation with local partners such as Chambers of Commerce, U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) offices and others. "People say we can do the work in other ways, by just setting up in a local facility on a part-time basis. That is true and we do

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# Excellence in Environment or Energy Economic Development

*Saginaw Future, Inc.; Michigan Economic Development Corporation;  
Saginaw County Chamber of Commerce*

Communities across the country are looking to utilize their assets to capitalize on our nation's efforts to "go green." In Saginaw County, Mich., a \$1 billion investment from Hemlock Semiconductor has enabled the region to take advantage of the national movement to establish a new industry cluster, create jobs and spur an economic resurgence in this 200,000-person community.

Hemlock Semiconductor Group, a Dow Corning joint venture, is the largest provider of polycrystalline silicon, a key component of solar panel construction and a major component of one-third of all electronics devices. In 2005, Hemlock Semiconductor invested \$500 million to expand its existing operations, which created 300 new permanent jobs. However, in 2007, when the company announced another \$1 billion investment and began looking for another site to expand its solar operations, Michigan was not in the running. At that time, Michigan was unable to compete due to energy costs, infrastructure needs and other financial concerns.

Saginaw Future Inc. (a public-private alliance of local businesses, the County of Saginaw, City of Saginaw, 16 local municipalities), the Michigan Economic Development Corporation and the Saginaw County Chamber of Commerce, brought together leaders and organizations from across the state to help increase the region's attractiveness to the company. In 2009, Hemlock Semiconductor announced that it would invest an additional \$1 billion for this third expansion, bringing its total investment in Saginaw County to \$2.5 billion in just five years.

Much of the success in landing these additional expansions in Saginaw was rooted in the ability of state and local leaders to work together and address concerns



Saginaw County's Hemlock Semiconductor is the largest producer of polycrystalline silicon in the world, a key material used to manufacture solar cells and semiconductor devices.

through tax credits, job training assistance and other incentives.

In fact, when speaking of the success of this expansion, JoAnn Crary, president of Saginaw Future Inc., says, "One of the best things was working together across geographic boundaries and party lines and between state and local government. Giving credit is one of those actions, that when shared, is contagious. In our case, there are so many people and organizations that can take a bow."

And that partnership was responsible for an incentive package that included Michigan Economic Growth Authority tax credits valued at \$10.3 million (over 20 years), personal property, real property and state education tax abatements. Also included were energy credits, \$6.8 million in infrastructure improvements and up to \$1.2 million in Michigan Department of Transportation road improvements. Job training funds that totaled \$190,000 were also a part of the package, as well as new Anchor Zone incentives, which provide tax credits for anchor companies (those companies that attract or influence suppliers or customers).

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Nasr. "CIMS' diverse team – combining full-time researchers and other staff members – can handle any issues that arise by engaging faculty and students in projects that are a good fit with their background and expertise."

CIMS has grown as the umbrella organization for five research institutions as well as one clean energy incubator that resides onsite at RIT. Since 2003, CIMS has grown two-fold to 64 full-time researchers and staff, and revenue has grown over 60 percent to over \$10.1 million in annual external funding.

CIMS' economic development efforts have focused on key clusters identified in a 2004 EDA-funded report titled, "*Roadmap for the Revitalization of Upstate New York Manufacturing.*" Small and mid-sized companies have estimated that the CIMS roadmap implementation (CIMS follow-up to the report) has created over 1,200 jobs, retained 1,738 positions and increased sales revenue by an estimated \$441 million throughout the state.

Since its inception, CIMS has interacted with over 1,000 companies, completed over 1,100 industrial projects and conducted more than 600 training courses for over 12,000 participants from around the world. The 170,000 square-foot CIMS facility includes research, test and educational facilities such as technology bays, specialized applied technology laboratories and a state-of-the-art training center.

"We've developed that network and it has become very routine for us. It's our culture and it is very rewarding to see the results in our backyard," said Dr. Nasr. ■

<http://www.cims.rit.edu/>



# Excellence in Historic Preservation-led Strategies

## City of Dubuque, Iowa

As the oldest city in Iowa, Dubuque has truly earned its moniker as “Masterpiece on the Mississippi.” Founded in 1833, Dubuque faced high unemployment (23 percent in 1985) and declining population rates as business and industry left this small river city in the Midwest. However, since that time, Dubuque has emerged as an innovative city that utilizes its rich history, downtown riverfront and culture to remain both unique and competitive.

In fact, just two decades since, someone posted a billboard outside city limits that said, “Would the last person to leave Dubuque please turn out the lights?” Dubuque has been recognized as an All-America City (National Civic League, 2007), one the 100 Best Communities for Young People (National America’s Promise Alliance, 2007/2008), Most Livable Small City (U.S. Conference of Mayors, 2008) and America’s Top 100 Places to Live (RelocateAmerica.com, 2009).

The revitalization of Dubuque has been evolutionary since the 1980s, however, over the last five years, Dubuque’s Mayor Roy Buol and the Dubuque City Council have adopted sustainability as their top priority and engaged the community to create a shared vision for their future. “Sustainable Dubuque” emerged from the collective efforts of the city’s citizens, leadership, businesses and colleges.

Dubuque utilized a community-driven task force to shape this vision and actively engage its citizens through surveys, meetings, presentations and just simply “pounding the pavement.”

Commitment to historic preservation is a large part of the Sustainable Dubuque initiative, which emphasizes the reuse and repurposing of existing buildings. The city has worked hand-in-hand with developers to transform historic buildings throughout Dubuque’s Main Street, the Dubuque Historic Millwork District and the downtown waterfront into multi-use structures including office, residential, retail and recreation spaces.

In January 2009, IBM announced that they would create a new Technology Service Delivery Center bringing 1,300 IT jobs to Dubuque; a significant employment opportunity for a city with a population of 60,000 people. IBM leaders selected Dubuque because of its strong public-private partnerships and its commitment to sustainability.

Greater Dubuque Development Corporation and Dubuque Initiatives, two pivotal players in creating this partnership with IBM, worked with the city government and many other partners to renovate the downtown Roshek Building, a historic former department store built during the Great Depression, to create a suitable and



The restored Dubuque Star Brewery and nearby Mississippi Riverwalk are popular locations for Dubuque gatherings.

sustainable home for IBM that retains the historic character of the building.

Today, public and private investments in downtown Dubuque verge on \$300 million, and over 7,000 people are now working in downtown. Dubuque’s Main Street is the country’s longest-operating Urban Main Street program and became the first recipient of the National Main Street Center’s Great American Main Street Award in 1995. Assistant City Manager Teri Goodmann said, “We believe these old buildings define our character and tell the story of the men and women who lived here before.” ■

<http://www.cityofdubuque.org/>  
<http://www.envision2010.org/>

### ► Saginaw, cont’d from page 3

But community leaders have recognized the potential of the market beyond the investment by Hemlock Semiconductor, which is committed to helping the state and local market attract a solar supply chain.

In addition to recruitment of new companies into the region, Saginaw Future and its partners are also investing in workforce development and research and development initiatives. For example, Delta

College, a community college in the Great Lakes Bay Region, offers a Chemical Process Technology associate degree and a short-term, 480-hour accelerated Pre-Chemical Process Operator “Fast Start” program.

The Mid-Michigan Innovation Center (MMIC), a private business incubator, has established \$1.65 million from five area foundations to connect industrial entrepreneurs and businesses to resources and

expertise. The industry focus of the Center is in material sciences, information technology and alternative energies.

According to the Crary, success has been a natural result of the broader community culture to work together, “So many people that own the success...People are excited and everyone wants to play a part. When you allow people to use their talents and be part of solution, then the sky is the limit to what you can accomplish.” ■

# Excellence in Urban or Suburban Economic Development

*JumpStart, Inc., Cleveland, Ohio*

Earlier this decade, business and civic leaders in Northeast Ohio recognized the need to think differently about promoting innovation and entrepreneurship in the region. While the area was home to many innovative and interesting programs to help local entrepreneurs, most of these efforts were not having a significant impact on the wider regional economy. A 2003 Task Force report sponsored by Nortech, the Northeast Ohio Technology Coalition, suggested that the region consider consolidating existing support organizations and creating several new initiatives to “jump start” local entrepreneurship.

**“The level of local business commitment has been both surprising and impressive. They get it!”**

**—Ray Leach,  
CEO, Jumpstart**

Appropriately enough, JumpStart, Inc. grew out of this initial research effort. Serving 21 counties in Northeast Ohio, JumpStart supports entrepreneurs with intensive business assistance/consulting services combined with critical investment capital. It seeks to bring together a full-range of entrepreneurial support services and tools in order to accelerate the growth of high-impact ventures. JumpStart’s strategy has focused on transforming the region from commodity and old-line manufacturing to entrepreneurial-based economy.

Ray Leach, serial entrepreneur and Chief Executive Officer of JumpStart, utilizes his vast experience with starting businesses to manage the growth of the organization. Much like starting his own companies, Leach focuses on raising funds and serving the customer, but, he acknowledges, “it can be even more complicated and challenging.”

So far, Leach and the JumpStart team, which includes dozens of economic development partners, have successfully managed the process. JumpStart has raised \$47 million over the past four years, with 50 percent of that money coming from private investors. More importantly, the program is having a large regional economic impact. A recent Cleveland State University study estimated JumpStart’s local impact at \$75.7 million. The study also acknowledged that labor income grew by 10 percent (to 20.9 million); state and local tax revenues increased by \$3.3 million; and federal tax revenues rose by \$5.5 million.

Over the past four years, JumpStart has provided more than 63,000 hours of technical assistance, responded to more than 7,400 entrepreneurial inquiries and reviewed more than 1,650 business plans. Even with this huge outreach effort, the JumpStart team’s limited resources allow them to cultivate deeper relationships with only a few hundred firms.

According to Leach, two prerequisites are necessary to build a program similar to

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Kevin Mendelsohn, Venture Partner within JumpStart Ventures, explaining the process for working with JumpStart. (Middle) entrepreneur Kevin Berner, (left) entrepreneur Arnon Chait

**▶ LBTC, cont'd from page 3**

that as well. But, it just doesn’t get as much attention as an 18-wheeler,” said D’Agostino, “That brings people out and sends a strong message.”

At present, the mobile unit completes about 30 visits per year, with each visit lasting anywhere from one to five days. The LBTC team works closely with federal, state and local partners to generate attention and interest, and to encourage local entrepreneurs to sign up for workshops, counseling or other services.

Since it began operations, the Incubator on Wheels has served nearly 1,400 Louisiana residents, leading to the creation of 110 new businesses across the state. D’Agostino and the LBTC team are proud of these impacts, but they are also heartened by the positive response they have received in rural Louisiana. As D’Agostino relates, “Many business owners in these communities rarely get access to the high-quality services available in more urban areas. They really appreciate that we are reaching out to them.”

When asked to offer lessons learned from this effort, D’Agostino emphasized the importance of partnerships and strong connections to federal agencies. LBTC has worked with agencies such as EDA and USDA, who provide funding and help promote this work, as well as local officials who best understand how to reach out and support their local entrepreneurs. ■

<http://www.bus.lsu.edu/lbtc/>



JumpStart in a community:

- First, local leaders need to fully understand the characteristics of the local entrepreneurial economy, i.e., what do local firms need to succeed?
- Second, support programs need to develop a governance structure that links key stakeholders for the long term. Supporting entrepreneurs takes time and requires extensive commitments, in terms of both time and money, to have real long-term impact.

In Cleveland, private sector involvement has allowed the program much success. Leach notes, "The level of local business commitment has been both surprising and impressive. They get it!" ■

<http://www.jumpstartinc.org>  
<http://www.nortech.org/pdf/NETFreport.pdf>

## Excellence in Economic Diversification Strategies

### *City of Kannapolis, North Carolina*

It's often said that crisis breeds opportunity. In 2003, Kannapolis, N.C., faced a tremendous opportunity when the local Pillowtex textile plant closed. A long-time community anchor, the Pillowtex closure put 4,500 people out of work and left 280 acres of company property vacant.

With a population of about 40,000, the Kannapolis community was hit hard by the closure. Not only facing a loss in jobs, the community also lost a part of its image as the town and the plant had grown in tandem and most of the city's utilities and other infrastructure were directly tied to the company. Moreover, many residents had never known of life without the plant.

Kannapolis community leaders were not completely unprepared, as they had long anticipated—and feared—the Pillowtex closure. Leaders had begun some initial planning to prepare for the worst, however, the plant sat empty for over a year until investor David H. Murdock, owner of Castle & Cooke and Dole Foods, opted to purchase the facility in 2004.

At the time of purchase, Murdock had few concrete ideas about future uses of the site, but he initiated a series of discussions with state and community leaders. They soon zeroed in on a set of institutions focused on supporting nutrition and healthy lifestyles, a long-time interest of Murdock. These discussions eventually helped to seed plans for one of the largest urban redevelopment projects in the United States - the North Carolina Research Campus (NCRC), which was developed in partnership with the University of North Carolina system.

Based on investments of more than \$1.5 billion, the NCRC will eventually host 10 universities, hundreds of life-science firms, and major residential and retail developments. By 2020, NCRC is expected to be home to more than 3.2 million square feet of office, lab and civic space.

NCRC is intended to be a major center for medical research with the primary focus on discovering new ways of cultivating and harvesting plants and vegetables to find cures for diabetes, brain disease, obesity, cancer and other diseases. NCRC will also foster collaborations between universities, academic researchers and private industry. The primary research facility, the David H. Murdock Core Laboratory, will have more than 300,000 square feet of lab space and will be home to leading-edge research equipment not yet available on the market. These research tools and facilities will be made available to all NCRC partners.

In Kannapolis' case, the city was aggressive in sponsoring economic analyses and developing new programs that are helping to maximize the opportunity. City leaders have also reached across the region to build new partnerships. For example, the city and county are jointly managing one of North Carolina's largest tax-increment financing districts as part of this project. The city and



This May 2009 rendering showcases the proposed NCRC campus.

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## ► Kannapolis, cont'd from page 6

county have also reorganized their economic development departments to better respond to the NCRC opportunity.

In fact, city leaders, NCRC, the North Carolina Biotechnology Center and Carolinas Medical Center-Northeast funded an economic impact and SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis. According to the

analysis, the campus could generate 37,000 new jobs in the six-county region within 25 years of completion of development. Many of these jobs will have an higher average salary than the traditional textile jobs that once existed in the surrounding communities.

Groundbreaking research is already underway at NCRC. The M.U.R.D.O.C.K. study is enrolling residents in a multi-year

longitudinal study, modeled after the Framingham studies of heart disease, to assess risk factors for leading diseases like diabetes and cancer. As Kannapolis City Manager Mike Legg has noted, "(NCRC) is not about building and cement, but about the research and its impact. . . It's way bigger than just economic development." ■

<http://www.ncresearchcampus.net/>

## Excellence in Community and Faith-Based Social Entrepreneurship

### *Center for Employment Training, San Jose, California*

Across the country, workforce and economic development leaders face unique challenges in providing human development, job training and placement services for chronically underserved communities.

Serving distressed communities, and the disadvantaged citizens who live in those communities, is the primary focus of the Center for Employment Training (CET). Headquartered in San Jose, Calif., CET advances social entrepreneurship as a community redevelopment strategy in communities of chronic economic stress. They provide job training, job placement and supportive services to students in order to prepare them for full-time, permanent, unsubsidized employment that leads to self-sufficiency.

CET's network includes job training and service centers across the United States, which serve 30,000 participants a year. Most of CET's students come from at-risk and underserved populations such as high school dropouts, public aid recipients, migrant and seasonal farmworkers, single parents, re-entry participants, disadvantaged youth, dislocated workers, disabled and older workers.

Beyond job training, CET looks at all of the barriers to employment for these individuals and provides services ranging from financial aid to transportation, adult

literacy, emergency assistance and others. Hermelinda Sapien, President and Chief Executive Officer of CET, explains their success, "By focusing on the complete package [beyond just job skills], we are really able to address a student's concerns and employment challenges and give them the self-confidence they need to succeed. Ultimately, by focusing on both human development and skill development, we create a much more confident job candidate."

Many CET graduates have taken on entrepreneurial ventures and own auto shops, child care centers, restaurants, real estate offices and other commercial pursuits. Additionally, thousands of graduates have become teachers, college professors, authors, consultants and trainers.

The successes of CET's students have had a ripple effect in communities across the country. From July 1, 2007 to June 30, 2008, CET-operated training centers served 5,306 people and 2,308 were placed in full-time, permanent, unsubsidized jobs with benefits and a career path. The placement rate for CET graduates was 89 percent.

However, more impressive is the financial impact. Of those entering the program, the average pre-training income was \$7,498. Upon graduation and entry into

the workforce, CET participant's post-training average annual income, with an estimated 20 percent for fringe benefits, was \$28,510. This reflects a threefold increase in annual income following training and placement.

**"Ultimately, by focusing on both human development and skill development, we create a much more confident job candidate."**

**—Hermelinda Sapien  
President and CEO, CET**

While the nation faces rising unemployment rates in many cities, Sapien acknowledges that CET is feeling the effects of the economic downturn. "We have definitely seen an increased interest in our programs and we are working closely with businesses and industry leaders to identify opportunities. We have also seen more requests for other support services so we are always looking for funding avenues, partners and how to leverage existing programs and resources."

To support this growing need, corporate administration at CET is seeking creative

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### **Upcoming Economic Development Events**

#### **IEDC 2010 Leadership Summit, The Woodlands, Texas**

January 31-February 2, 2010  
[http://www.iedconline.org/  
LeadershipSummit/index.html](http://www.iedconline.org/LeadershipSummit/index.html)

#### **NARC's 2010 Nation Conference of Regions, Washington, DC**

February 21-23, 2010  
<http://narc.org/events/conferences.html>

#### **NADO's 2010 Washington Policy Conference, Washington, DC**

March 1-4, 2010  
[http://www.nado.org/conferences/  
washington.php](http://www.nado.org/conferences/washington.php)

#### **APA's National Conference, New Orleans, LA**

April 10-13, 2010  
[http://www.planning.org/conference/  
index.htm](http://www.planning.org/conference/index.htm)

#### **▶ CET, cont'd from page 7**

ways to enhance its potential for job creation with housing rehabilitation, weatherization and solar technology projects nationwide. CET is also enhancing existing training, creating new training programs which incorporate green technology, and partnering with community colleges and universities to address green job training.

“For over 40 years, it’s been about our students and making sure that we empower them to do well. So many of our students give back and come back to give to others,” says Sapien. “The economic development benefits are realized because the individuals who come here want to work, learn and develop a career. They do the work and make it happen for themselves.” ■

<http://www.cetweb.org/index.php>